From:	Rob Leikind
To:	McGovern, Marc
Cc:	Durbin, Wilford; "Jeremy Burton (jburton@jcrcboston.org)"; "rtrestan@adl.org"
Subject:	The United Nations and Human Rights
Date:	Wednesday, April 18, 2018 6:26:42 PM

Dear Mayor McGovern,

Thank you for all your efforts to bring the discussion concerning the resolution on HP and Israel to a fair and responsible result. I am writing about a related matter that may be time sensitive. So, I'd like to bring it to your attention now while you are still weighing possible alternate resolutions.

I understand from conversations that I have had that thought is being given to developing a comprehensive and balanced resolution that does not single out any nation or country, but rather looks objectively at the actions of given countries and companies. A number of people have suggested that UN human rights reports might provide the foundation from which to assess human rights concerns in any given country. Regrettably, the UN turns out to be an especially poor source for a comprehensive view of human rights around the world. They have a number of bodies charged with looking at different human rights related issues, but the one that plays a central role is the UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR).

The UNHCR is a heavily politicized body that often does more to protect violators of human rights than to bring them to account. To understand why is one simply has to look at who sits on the council. Current members include Cuba, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, China, etc. Given its membership, this body spends a disproportionate amount of its time and capital condemning Israel. In fact, Israel is the only country in the world that has a permanent standing agenda item, which provides an opportunity at each meeting to focus on Israel to the exclusion of countries around the world (the BDS movement is an extension of this larger global effort to demonize and isolate Israel. It's origins go back to the year 2001 and a UN Human Rights meeting in Durban South Africa). As a result, each year Israel is subject to more condemning resolutions than any country in the world. In the 10 years from 2006 to 2016 more than 50% of resolutions condemning a state were directed against Israel and many of the world's worst human rights abusers have been overlooked

Fortunately, there are reliable and respected alternatives. One is Freedom House, which puts out an annual human rights report for every country in the world. The second is the US State Department, which also produces a comprehensive annual country by country human rights report. I have included links to both. I have also included a number of reports, which speak to the sadly degraded state of human rights protection through the UN>

I would encourage that the Cambridge City Council steer clear of using the UN as a reference point as it might introduce other issues.

Thank you for giving consideration to this information.

Respectfully,

Rob Leikind

Freedom House and the US State Department Comprehensive Global Annual Human Rights Review

Freedom House Annual Report – A Comprehensive Country By Country Review with Detailed Analysis
https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017

US State Department Annual Report on Human Rights with Detailed Country By Country Reports
https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper

General Report that Displays Which Countries Have the Most Severe Decline in Human Rights
https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018

On the UN Human Rights Commission

Secretary of State John Kerry
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/kerry-and-lavrov-meet-in-geneva/2015/03/02/41e8f2d2-9ac5-4408-bf7f-031674cc1a0d_story.html?utm_term=.05cdcc7137d4

Obama Administration
https://www.unwatch.org/us-nominee-to-un-rights-council-pledges-to-eliminate-anti-israel-agenda-item-refocus-on-real-abusers/

Ambassador Samantha Power
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qH7xgHjVldQ

US Senate
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/all-100-senators-sign-letter-asking-for-equal-treatment-of-israel-at-the-un/2017/04/27/79f961fe-2b95-11e7-b605-33413c691853_story.html?utm_term=.9da81b4c302f

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